

Archives & Collections

Guide to using our online catalogue

We have a lot of researchers contacting us who have struggled to use our online catalogue to identify what they need. If you're not familiar with it, it can be tricky so this step by step guide will help you get the most from it.

When you visit <http://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk> you will see the following homepage:



REWRITING THE BOOK
THE LIBRARY OF BIRMINGHAM

A A A | Text only Search

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Using the Archive service
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Welcome to Birmingham Archives and Heritage online catalogue

This website provides access to the Birmingham Archives and Heritage online catalogue.

Please note that not all of our catalogues are currently available on CalmView; if you cannot find what you are searching for it may be available as a printed catalogue in the Wolfson Centre.

The Wolfson Centre for Archival Research at the Library of Birmingham is now open.

Items from the Archives, Heritage and Photography collections

What's New: Records of the Cadbury Trusts

This collection documents the work of the eight interrelated trusts and companies created by Barrow and Geraldine Cadbury and their son Paul Cadbury. These include the Barrow and Geraldine S. Cadbury Trust, the Barrow Cadbury Fund (a benevolent fund), the Paul S. Cadbury Trust, the Barrow Cadbury Fund Ltd. (a charitable company), the Southfield Trust, the

Figure 1: Online catalogue homepage with search box highlighted

The search box I've highlighted above is for an any text search. I searched for steam engines and it returned the following:

The screenshot shows a search results page with a navigation bar at the top containing 'Home', 'Advanced Search', 'Showcase', and 'Image Gallery'. A search box with the text 'Text only' and a 'Search' button is visible. Below the navigation bar, there is a sidebar with links such as 'Using the Archive service', 'Glossary', 'Useful links', 'Help', 'How do I search the catalogue?', 'Guides to sources', 'What is in the catalogue?', 'Access to restricted records', and 'Contact Us'. The main content area is titled 'Search Results' and includes a message: 'Can't find what you're looking for? Please contact us directly, as it may be that the catalogue you are interested in is only available as a paper catalogue in our Archives searchroom.' Below this message is a 'Refine Search' button and pagination information: '1 to 500 of 647' with 'Next', 'Last', and 'All' options. A table of search results is displayed with the following columns: 'Ref No', 'Level', 'Title', 'Date', 'Thumbnail', and 'Document'. The first row shows 'MS 1155' (highlighted with a red circle) under 'Ref No', 'Collection' under 'Level', 'Inventory of Steam engines, boilers, machinery, fixtures and fittings in and about Mr William...' under 'Title', and 'May 1885' under 'Date'. The second row shows 'MS 1380' under 'Ref No', 'Collection' under 'Level', 'Letters Patent' under 'Title', and '14 June 1785' under 'Date'.

Ref No	Level	Title	Date	Thumbnail	Document
MS 1155	Collection	Inventory of Steam engines, boilers, machinery, fixtures and fittings in and about Mr William...	May 1885		
MS 1380	Collection	Letters Patent	14 June 1785		

Figure 2: Search results

As you can see there are 647 results for the search! By clicking on the column titles, you can order the results by title, date and so on. You can also click on the Refine Search button to add additional information. To get into the full Collection Level entry, click on the reference number as highlighted above.

You can also do an Advanced Search by clicking on the tab from the homepage:



Figure 3: Advanced Search tab

This will bring up more options to search. I've searched specifically for the James Watt Papers by putting MS 3219 in the Ref No box:

The screenshot shows a web interface for an archive. At the top, there are three 'A' icons and a 'Text only' dropdown menu. Below this is a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Advanced Search', 'Showcase', and 'Image Gallery'. The 'Advanced Search' section is active, displaying instructions: 'For guidance on using Advanced Search visit the [Help](#) pages' and 'To search for a collection you know the reference for, e.g. MS 4000, in the RefNo field type in 'MS 4000*'. The search form includes fields for 'Any Text', 'Ref No' (containing 'MS 3219'), 'Date', 'Title', 'Description', and 'Level'. There are 'Search' and 'Clear' buttons at the bottom of the form. A left sidebar contains links like 'Using the Archive service', 'Glossary', 'Useful links', 'Help', 'How do I search the catalogue?', 'Guides to sources', 'What is in the catalogue?', 'Access to restricted records', and 'Contact Us'.

Figure 4: Advanced Search for MS 3219

This will search for a specific collection and should only produce one hit on the search. Whether you search for a specific collection or do an any text search, the search results page will look the same. Click on the Ref No (as shown in Figure 2 above) and this will take you to the Collection Level entry. Here you will find background information about the collection. You can see what level you are in on every catalogue entry by the **Level** field.

Figure 5: MS 3219 Collection Level entry

Click on the Reference Number as highlighted above and this will take you to what we call the tree:

Figure 6: MS 3219 Tree view

Note the (+) sign highlighted above. This means there are further records in that series. Click on the (+) until you see a (-) sign as follows:

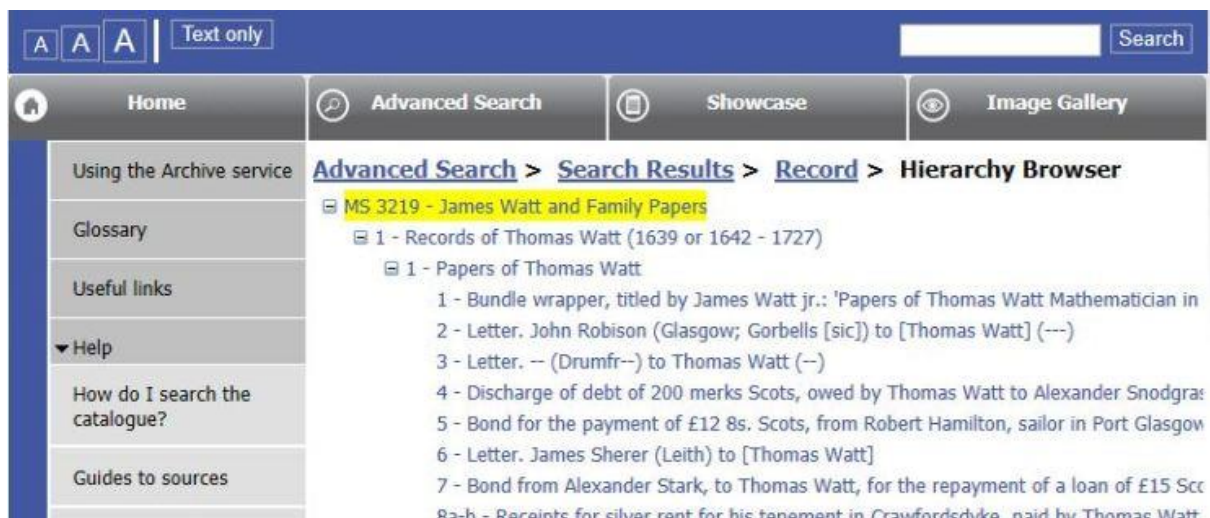


Figure 7: MS 3219 Extended tree view

Once you reach the point where there are no (+) or (-) signs, click on the title:



Figure 8: Title highlighted

This will take you to the record you need when ordering documents:

The screenshot shows a digital archive interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the text 'Text only' and a 'Search' button. Below the search bar is a navigation menu with four tabs: 'Home', 'Advanced Search', 'Showcase', and 'Image Gallery'. The 'Advanced Search' tab is active, and the breadcrumb trail reads: 'Advanced Search > Search Results > Record > Hierarchy Browser > Record'. The main content area displays the following information:

- MS 3219 - James Watt and Family Papers**
- 1 - Records of Thomas Watt (1639 or 1642 - 1727)**
- 1 - Papers of Thomas Watt**

Below the breadcrumb trail is a table with the following fields:

Ref No	MS 3219/1/1/3
FindingNumber	MS 3219/1/1/3
Title	Letter. -- (Drumfr--) to Thomas Watt (--)
Date	22 May 1695
Level	Item
Description	[?Concerning disposal of heather]. (The edge of the letter is damaged.)
Extent	1
Format	Item
AccessStatus	Open

Figure 9: MS 3219 Item Level entry

Note in the above that it is an Item Level entry and has both a Ref No and a FindingNumber. To order documents, please use the **FindingNumber** when contacting us. You can also see the bottom field says AccessStatus. If this says anything other than open, you might not be able to view the item. If that field says Closed (condition), Closed (content) or Closed until assessed, please contact us to find out more.

Top Tips:

Check the tree!

Some entries only have a **Collection** Level entry, some will only have a **Series** Level but most will have an **Item** Level. You can only find this by checking the tree and if there is a (+) sign. Retrieving a whole collection is rarely possible so we do need the Item level reference where available. If you do want to see a whole series of documents, please let us know when making an appointment.

Click on the RefNo!

To get back to the tree structure from a catalogue entry, click on the RefNo as highlighted in Figure 5.

Check for the FindingNumber!

This is the number we need when retrieving documents for you.

Searching within a collection?

From the advanced search box (see Figure 4) put the reference number in the Ref No box followed by an asterisk (e.g. MS 3219*). Then put in your search term in the Any Text box (e.g. Steam) and it will search for occurrences of that word within that collection.

Is it a local studies item?

As a general guide, any references beginning L, LF, LP, AX and so on are local studies and we also need the title when ordering.

Of course, you are welcome to contact us directly if you've been through the above and still can't find what you are looking for.

Happy searching!